



**Development occurs in predictable patterns.**

Many families – and others – “get” the concept of development occurring in a predictable pattern. They’ve seen and/or bought books with names like “What your preschooler must know,” and “What your kindergartner needs to know.”

The concept of variability of development is a little more difficult for some people.

That’s perhaps why I got a call from a parent a few years ago in January. Here’s what she said:

“I have two sons. One is four and one is six. When my six-year-old was in prekindergarten, he could write his first and last name by Thanksgiving. It’s January, and my four-year-old can’t write his first name. What’s wrong with this teacher?”

Those were her words. Honestly.

I had a principal once who would say, “Remember, parents send us the best children they have. They aren’t keeping the good ones at home and sending us the rest.” Think about it. And most parents and grandparents think their children are gifted. That’s a good thing. Isn’t that how we want families to believe? (Isn’t that what how we should be thinking?)

Well, I talked to the mother the same way you probably would and asked her if her two boys had walked the same day of their lives, talked the same day, and other developmental milestones. In fact, the younger son had a teacher who was gifted at challenging and encouraging each child at their own level.

Children will achieve, children will develop, children will learn, children will show progress. But they will show progress at their own pace, with encouragement to meet appropriate challenges.